

Chapter 14

Late style and the paradoxical poetics of the Schubert–Berio *Renderings*

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The artistic career of Franz Schubert still presents a strange paradox. Some scholars have regarded him almost as an empyrean figure who has written the best Lieder in vocal literature.¹ But even that is sometimes held against him. In a discussion of the “Unfinished” Symphony Carl Dahlhaus criticizes the static lyricism of Schubert’s themes, which he considers self-contained and incapable of development—an opinion contradicted by Gustav Mahler when he declared: “You could easily take up a theme by Schubert and develop it for the first time. You wouldn’t even do any harm to the themes: they are so undeveloped.”²

Meanwhile questions about Schubert’s sexuality have been raised because of his entanglements with Vogl as well as epistolary relations with members of the reading circle.³ And then there was his bachelor life with Franz Schober.⁴ And his alleged devotion to Therese Grob, the soprano who was “the first and most ardent love of his life,” as Brian Newbould writes in his richly informative biography.⁵

An artistic figure who practices concealment attracts all the more interest, as many artists know. In contrast to the voluminous correspondence, diaries, and recorded conversations with Goethe, less than a hundred Schubert letters survive. So we have unanswered questions about Schubert’s life: his journeyman years; his romantic relationships; his preoccupation with death; the counter-images of the

1 For an example of such clichéd portraits, see such older biographies as Hans Gál, *Franz Schubert and the Essence of Melody* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1974), p. 185.

2 “Von Schubert könnte man ruhig die meisten Themen aufgreifen und erst ausführen. Ja, das würde ihnen gar nicht schaden, so ganz und gar unausgearbeitet sind sie.” Report by Natalie Bauer-Lechner, in Norbert Bolin, “... eine Welt verändern.’ Luciano Berio: *Rendering* (nach Schubert) per orchestra.” For further discussion on this subject, see Robert Bruce, “The Lyrical Element in Schubert’s Instrumental forms”, *The Music Review*, 30 (1969): 131–7.

3 See, for example, Maynard Solomon’s seminal article “Franz Schubert and the Peacocks of Benvenuto Cellini”, *19th Century Music*, 12/33 (1989): 193–206.

4 For contrasting readings, see, for example, Christopher Gibbs, *The Life of Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 15–17, 45–9, 99–103, 117–21; Elizabeth Norman McKay, *Franz Schubert: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 117–26, 160–63.

5 For different readings of their relationship see, for example, Brian Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1997), pp. 36; Christopher Gibbs, *The Life of Schubert*, pp. 37–40; Elizabeth Norman McKay, *Franz Schubert: A Biography*, pp. 40–44.

“natural Schubert”⁶ and intransigent artist;⁷ the tragic portrayal of irreconcilable antinomies in his life and art.

One aspect of Schubert’s life which has provoked the most interest is the symbolic significance of Schubert’s early death. This is a charged subject, especially as there is a new perception of Franz Grillparzer’s controversial epitaph, “The Art of Music here entombed a rich possession, but even fairer hopes.”⁸ Or rather the revival of an old form, a recoiling from the idea of Schubert’s untimely death which led Robert Schumann to declare: “It is pointless to guess at what more [Schubert] might have achieved. He did enough and let them be honored who have striven and accomplished as he did.”⁹ Christopher Gibbs’s seminal study of the composer provides a report of this fraught area. He rejects the sentimental confusions that have underscored the legacy of Schubert’s achievement and challenges modern perceptions of Schubert’s early death:

Had Beethoven carried out the suicide he apparently contemplated around the time of the *Heiligenstadt Testament* [1802], in other words at the very age Schubert died, the extent of his compositional legacy would hardly match Schubert’s.¹⁰

Gibbs’s centenary biography on the composer is a thoughtful book on a thorny subject which deals with recent attacks on Schubert and presents a modern image of the composer which has not been challenged—perhaps because Gibbs’s precise and elusively feline mind evades capture. But these are contributions to an ongoing argument, which still lacks all the evidence beyond Schubert’s letters.

One area which Gibbs does not tackle, however, is the question of death’s relevance in Schubert’s life and letters. Images of death seem to leak into Schubert’s late work. Indeed a preoccupation with death was part of European Romantic culture. It was rife at the time and runs riot in Schubert’s late work and letters. While Gibbs is unerring in his attack on the sentimental reception of Schubert’s early death, it is also true to say Death “snatched him away” while he was still busy and a glance at Schubert’s letters suggests he was aware Death was waiting. The persona in Schubert’s letters is a mirror image of the narrator in Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time*, enchanted by new insights into the recoverability of the past and anguished at the shortness of the years or months that are probably left to him.¹¹ In Schubert’s letters one finds the quality of time altered, the present overshadowed by the darkening

6 Christopher Gibbs, “‘Poor Schubert’: images and legends of the composer”, in Christopher Gibbs (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 48.

7 *Schubert; Memories by His Friends*, coll. and ed. Otto Erich Deutsch (New York: Macmillan, 1958), p. 140.

8 For discussion of the epitaph, see Christopher Gibbs, *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, introduction, p. 1.

9 Christopher Gibbs, *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, p. 1.

10 Gibbs, “‘Poor Schubert’: images and legends of the composer”, p. 44.

11 Erich Valentin (ed.), *Franz Schubert Briefe* (Zurich: Diogenes Verlag, 1997): Franz Schubert to Leopold Kupelwieser, March 31, 1824, pp. 71–3.

landscapes of a winter's journey where "brightness falls from the air,"¹² a longing for the past,¹³ a newly immeasurable future or the shortness of time; a search for a life in music beyond the grave.¹⁴

The idea of timeliness in the passage of human life lies behind the biblical observation: "To everything there is a season ... a time to be born, a time to die."¹⁵ It is central to the organic, evolutionary theories of history, popular in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which delineate early, middle, and late periods, and to Adorno's essay fragment "Spätstil Beethovens" (Beethoven's Late Style).¹⁶ The undiminished power and abstracted quality of Goethe's late works are an example of late style: *Wanderjahre* and *Faust II* crown a lifetime of artistic achievement and bear testimony to an apotheosis of artistic creativity and power. Yet late style is not always the product of time. It may blossom before its season, perhaps under the shadow of death. In this sense chronology is supplanted by the reaching of a new level of expression¹⁷ or understanding such as Faust's discovery of land on which future generations can work independently, and he declares: "Zum Augenblicke dürft' ich sagen: Verweile doch! Du bist so schön" (Then to the moment I might say: Beautiful moment! Do not pass away).¹⁸ It is found in Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan*, the fruits of what the poet called his "Indian summer," suggesting his experience of the resurgence of creative energy rivaling that of his *Sturm und Drang* years. It is even present in the discovery by Schubert, at the height of his manhood, of the metaphysical surface which lies below the surface of Gretchen's spinning song, and which nevertheless could be realized in musical form. This

12 Thomas Nashe (1567–1601), "Adieu, Farewell Earth's Bliss" (from *Summer's Last Will and Testament*), l.17. See, for example, Schubert's famous letter to Kupelwieser, March 31, 1824, *Franz Schubert Briefe, Tagebuchnotizen, Gedichte*, ed. Erich Valentin (Zurich: Diogenes Verlag, 1997), pp. 71–2; Schubert's diary entries of 1824, *Franz Schubert Briefe*, pp. 70–71; Schubert's letter to his brother, Ferdinand, July 16–18, 1824, *Franz Schubert Briefe*, pp. 74–6.

13 See, for example, Schubert's letters to Anselm Hüttenbrenner, January 21, 1819, *Franz Schubert Briefe*, p. 49; to Schober, November 30, 1823 and September 21, 1824, *Franz Schubert Briefe*, pp. 69 and 79–80; to Moritz von Schwind, August 1824, *Franz Schubert Briefe*, pp. 77–8.

14 See, for example, Schubert's letters to Breitkopf and Härtel, August 12, 1826, *Franz Schubert Briefe*, pp. 104–105; to Heinrich Albert Probst, August 12, 1826, April 10, 1828, October 2, 1828, pp. 105–106, 114–15, 116–17; to B. Schott Söhne, February 21, 1828, April 10, 1828 and October 2, 1828, pp. 112–13, 113–14 and 116.

15 Ecclesiastes 3: 1–8.

16 Adorno, "Spätstil Beethovens" (1937) included in a collection of musical essays, *Moments musicaux* (1964) and again in *Essays on Music*, a posthumously published book on Beethoven (1993). "Late Style in Beethoven" has been published more recently in Theodor W. Adorno, *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert, trans. Susan H. Gillespie (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2002).

17 A good example is Goethe's *Wanderjahre*, which anticipates the modern novel in that it is not a tightly unified narrative perspective, but related stories knit together.

18 Goethe, *Faust II*, Act 5, "Grosser Vorhof des Palasts" (The Great Forecourt of the Palace), ll.11580, *Hamburger Ausgabe*, ed. Erich Trunz (Hamburg: Christian Wegner Verlag, 1964), vol. 3, p. 348.

quality of transcending time in “Gretchen am Spinnrade” reemerges in Schubert’s late works. It is found in the special ironic expressiveness voiced in Schubert’s setting of “Der Doppelgänger” which moves beyond Heine’s words, and in the Quintet in C major (D.956), a musical allegory which, like Homer’s *Odyssey*, conveys a sense of recapitulation and return.¹⁹ Like Schubert himself, such works are beyond their own time, ahead of it in terms of daring and startling newness, later than it in that they describe a return or homecoming to realms forgotten or left behind by the relentless advancement of history. Like T. S. Eliot in *Four Quartets* they are simultaneously in and out of time.

With such experiences of being in and out of time, Schubert arrived at the conditions for that special sense of lateness which Gibbs has so aptly defined.²⁰ In the midst of life Schubert was in death;²¹ his mind was concentrated; his endeavors to publish and the prolific nature of his compositional gifts in later years suggests that he distinguished death from dying. Was the unearthly serenity that permeates the Quintet an escape from the fierce weather of the mind? Or are the irreconcilable antinomies in Schubert’s late works musical proof of Yeats’s belief: “A man awaits his end dreading and hoping all”?²²

Whatever the answer to such rhetorical musings, one thing is clear: Schubert’s last works are saturated with images of death,²³ especially *Winterreise*—part of whose melancholy for performer and audience is the knowledge that Schubert was dying when he wrote the cycle. When writing *Winterreise* Schubert had not settled his quarrel with time. In this cycle Schubert identifies with an unstable personality perpetually at that border of existence where the human personality expresses itself most fully, whether in harmony or in contradiction with itself. The wanderer is an exile, who stands apart from the present. Time’s arrow²⁴ is pointing to the grave. Yet this journey towards oblivion is made in the presence of increasingly translucent major keys. And at the end of the cycle the negativity of death embodied in “Der Leiermann,” an image of horror for Schubert, dissolves in a musical resolution central to Schubert’s vision, whose late style does not admit the definitive cadences of death.

While Schubert’s identification with Müller’s Wanderer and Goethe’s Harper is because they both enter this precarious exilic realm, it is clear from his music that he was not interested in the idea of a dissolving self. In Edwin Arnold’s words

19 Charles Fisk reads the late piano works as Schubert’s coming to terms with the trauma of illness in its constant desire to return home, see his *Returning cycles: Contexts for the Interpretation of Schubert’s Impromptus and Last Sonatas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

20 Gibbs, “‘Poor Schubert’: images and legends of the composer”, pp. 43–5.

21 Book of Common Prayer (1662): *The Burial of the Dead*.

22 W.B. Yeats (1865–1939), “Death” (1933).

23 For alternative readings of this theme see, for example, Leo Black, *Franz Schubert: Music and Belief* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2003), p. 191.

24 The expression “time’s arrow” was used by Arthur Eddington to express “the one-way property of time which has no analogue in space”, see *The Nature of the Physical World* (New York: Macmillan, 1928). Here I am thinking in particular of “Der Wegweiser” (The Signpost).

No man shall 'scape from act
By shunning action; nay, and none shall come
By mere renouncements into perfectedness.²⁵

seem to foreshadow some of Schubert's late meditations: it is clear he wanted to continue with the self's making. The image of Schubert correcting proofs of the second part of *Winterreise* on his deathbed while going in and out of consciousness²⁶ shows us it is one thing to know you are dying and another to let go. Explorations of the making of the self can go on until the end. The self's unmaking is another affair, and Schubert's late style comes close to this.

The intransigence and unresolved contradiction in Schubert's life and art do not necessarily present opposing images of the composer, but rather the truth of unreconciled relations. For Hegel, such irreconcilable opposites were resolvable by means of the dialectic, with a reconciliation of opposites, a grand synthesis at the end. For Goethe, the most antithetical of imaginations, such irreconcilability was a quintessential component at the very core of human life and art. In a letter to Zelter in 1801, Goethe criticized the "poor picture" of a person bequeathed to us by those necrologists:

who, immediately after one's death, carefully balance the good and bad as perceived and applauded by the majority. They touch up his so-called virtues and vices with hypocritical righteousness, and thereby are worse than death in destroying a personality, which can be imagined only in the living union of those opposing qualities.²⁷

From Schubert's letters we know that joy as well as rage danced attendance on his final years,²⁸ and Schubert's late style has its playful as well as its tragic aspects.

Hugo Wolf is reported to have said, "A man is not taken away before he has said all he has to say."²⁹ Yet nothing is ever finished. In Schubert, as in Goethe, there is a plethora of "unmastered material."³⁰ In a letter to Zelter on September 4, 1831, just days after what was to be the last celebration of his birthday, Goethe records

25 *The Song Celestial. Or Bhagavad-Gita* (from *The Mahabharata*). Dialogue between Arjuna, Prince of India, and Krishna, the Supreme Being, trans. from the Sanskrit text by Sir Edwin Arnold (New York: Truslove, Hanson & Comba, Ltd, 1900).

26 Otto Erich Deutsch, *Schubert: Die Dokumente seines Lebens*, revised and enlarged edition (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1964), p. 822. Otto Erich Deutsch, *Schubert: Die Erinnerungen seiner Freunde*, original German version of *Schubert: Memoirs by his friends*, trans. Rosamund Ley and John Nowell (London: Macmillan, 1958), p. 40.

27 Lorraine Byrne Bodley, *Goethe and Zelter: Musical Dialogues* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), Letter no. 6, Goethe to Zelter, May 29, 1801.

28 One is reminded of Yeats's poem, "The Spur": "You think it horrible that lust and rage / Should dance attendance upon my old age; / They were not such a plague when I was young; / What else have I to spur me into song?", *The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1993), p. 359.

29 Hugo Wolf, cited in *A Dictionary of Musical Quotations*, comp. Ian Crofton and Donald Fraser (New York: Schirmer, 1985), p. 132.

30 The phrase is from Adorno's discussion of Beethoven's bequest; see his *Essays on Music*, p. 567.

the completion of *Faust II*—which Goethe considered the completion of his life's work—and yet, in the following paragraph the poet adds:

Now that these demands are satisfied new ones immediately press forward from behind *à la queue* as in a baker's shop. I know well what is needed; the future will show what can be done. I have planned far too many projects and in the end I have neither means nor strength to finish them. I dare not even think of *Die Natürliche Tochter*: how could I call to mind the enormity of the task there?³¹

Were Goethe's final words—a cry for “Mehr Licht!” (More light!)³²—a final embodiment of the human condition as continually striving, a counter-image to Schubert correcting proofs in the final hours of his life? Such existential questions cannot be answered. And Schubert's untimely death cannot but diminish us, because we are human. The energy of youth in the presence of impending death in Schubert's late works calls forth not a noble sadness, but something far deeper. It is the prerogative of great art that it arouses nameless emotions and is the location of such mysteries.

A glimpse of Schubert's “unmastered material”

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Schubert's death in 1978, some of Schubert's fragments were reexamined in Vienna's City Library. Through new dating techniques—analysis of handwriting and modern watermarking methods—the 17-page collection of fragments was regrouped into three sections with individual parts dated. The fragments comprised sketches for a Symphony in D (D.615) written in May 1818, a piano sketch to a Symphony in D (D.708A) that most likely dates from the Spring of 1821, and a two-stave particell to Schubert's last Symphony in D, (D.936A), which, by all available evidence, was never composed into a symphonic score. The experimental nature of this last fragment, popularly known as Schubert's Tenth Symphony and composed in the weeks leading up to the composer's death, immediately aroused the interest of musicologists and composers.³³

The first completion of the symphony was scored in 1980 by the British musicologist and composer Brian Newbould, who brought his knowledge of Schubert's compositional style to bear on his reconstruction of a fully developed symphony. Newbould's performing version was “made on the assumption—based on deduction from internal indications—that Schubert had come close to the stage at which sketching was completed and scoring could begin when death intervened.”³⁴ It seemed to Newbould unacceptable that this marvelous music, Schubert's farewell

31 Lorraine Byrne Bodley, *Goethe and Zelter: Musical Dialogues*, Letter no. 578, Goethe to Zelter, September 4, 1831.

32 The full quotation recorded by Chancellor Friedrich von Müller is: “Mehr Licht! Macht doch den zweiten Fensterladen auf, damit mehr Licht hereinkomme!” (More Light! Open the second shutter so that more light can come in!).

33 See Brian Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, “The Late Symphonies”, pp. 385–8.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 385.

to the world, should remain forever unknown to anyone other than scholars.³⁵ However, if it was to become known to music-lovers in general they would have to be able to hear it; and for the music to be heard it would have to be played; and to be played it would have to be rendered performable. Works of art place a premium on expression, articulation, and clarity. All the things we associate with writing and with performance involve a discourse that needs to be unfolded and then presented. Yet, in some places Schubert's sketch consists of nothing more than a line of single notes without any indication of what the harmony is, or the orchestration, or the tempo; so decisions about a host of matters such as these had to be made if the music was ever to be performed. After careful consideration Newbould applied himself to the task of rendering Schubert's sketch performable to give people an idea of its marvelous material, and of the unexpected direction in which Schubert was heading after the Ninth Symphony. The heart of this type of completion is Newbould's prescient understanding of Schubert's creativity.³⁶ Yet, as is characteristic of the reception of such completions, Paul-Gilbert Langevin and Harry Halbreich criticized Newbould's endeavor to reproduce faithfully Schubert's intentions for scholars and audiences, and encouraged the Belgian conductor and composer Pierre Bartholomée to undertake a revision of Newbould's score in 1983. According to the Swiss musicologist Thomas Gartmann, Bartholomée filled out the implied counterpoint and adopted Newbould's orchestration to modern scoring, so that trumpets, horns and timpani were used as opposed to period horns.³⁷

In contrast to Newbould's completion and Bartholomée's reworking, two subsequent reconstructions did not attempt to reproduce a complete work of art but emphasized its fragmentary nature: in 1982 the German musicologist and conductor Peter Gülke, recreated a printed version of what was essentially just a hypothetical score bearing the title *Sinfonie-Fragmente* (*Symphonic Fragments*). In the same year, the Swiss composer Roland Moser composed a "fragmentarisches Klangbild" (fragmentary sound picture), piecing together the shards of Schubert's symphonic score.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Both score and recording are available: *Franz Schubert Symphony no. 10, Realization: Brian Newbould*, full score (London: Faber, 1995) with commentary; *Franz Schubert Symphony no. 10 and other unfinished symphonies*, performed by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras (Hyperion CDA67000).

³⁷ Thomas Gartmann, "...daß nichts an sich selbst vollendet ist"[:] *Untersuchung zum Instrumentalschaffen von Luciano Berio* (Ph.D. Dissertaton, Zurich 1994), (Bern/Stuttgart/Wien: 1995), p. 22. Bartholomée "ergänzt angedeutete Kontrapunkte und erweitert in seiner effektvollen Instrumentation die zeitgebundenen technischen Möglichkeiten von Hörnern, Pauken und Trompeten."

Individuality and dual authorship: the Schubert–Berio *Rendering* for orchestra

Luciano Berio's finely-imagined realization of Schubert's fragmentary sketches in *Rendering* (1989–1990) combines all these approaches.³⁸ According to Gartmann, Berio “presents the score, uses what has been discarded, composes in the style of Schubert[’s Eighth Symphony], fills out the orchestration, yet makes the fragment visible and gives his commentary as a contemporary composer and in this way makes it possible to experience the distance and proximity of the music.”³⁹

The tale of Berio's compositional venture and the title Berio gives it is interesting because it reveals so many hidden facets. Upon discovery of the manuscript in 1978, Berio was immediately interested in Schubert's sketch, yet he only concretized his plans with the *Schubertiade Hohenems* commission in 1986. The working title of this version, Schubert–Berio *Opus X*, alludes to Berio's artistic intention: to orchestrate Schubert's fragment in such a way that the musical gaps remain visible. At the first performance of *Schubert-Fragmente/Instrumentierung für Hohenems* on June 18, 1988, given by the resident orchestra under the baton of Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Berio learnt of Gülke's version but rejected it as “unkünstlerisch” (inartistic). Berio was, however, also critical of his own realization, which he subsequently revised in the Spring of 1989, reworking it as a two-movement work with its current title, Schubert–Berio *Rendering*. This two-movement version was first performed at the Holland Festival in Amsterdam in 1989, again under the direction of Harnoncourt. Berio was critical of the performance once again and accused Harnoncourt of not understanding the underlying artistic principle, despite all his interest in the score. Harnoncourt's failure to realize the dreamlike quality of Berio's reconstruction, where his own artistic presence is implied, unsettled the composer who was also unhappy with the slower tempi and vibrato with which the Schubert quotations were performed.

Berio's final three-movement version and published score of 1991 was first performed on April 19, 1990 by the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra under the direction of Riccardo Chailly and is dedicated to this ensemble and conductor. Berio's revised score is radically different from earlier completions by Newbould and Bartholomée, which attempt to piece together fragments of the score to form a complete picture. In *Rendering* Berio makes no attempt to supply the missing pieces of the jigsaw puzzle. His final published version is even distinguished from his own earlier attempts through comprehensive and radical changes—among other things through his decision to include Schubert's score on the same page to serve as an

38 It also reflects the “Schubert cult” in modern composition which emerged in the 1970s. Examples include: Hans Zender's *Schubert-Chöre* 1–4; Aribert Reimann's *Metamorphosen on a Menuet by Franz Schubert*; Hans Werner Henze's orchestral fantasy *Der Erlkönig*, and Kurt Schwertsik's *Epilogue to “Rosamunde.”*

39 Thomas Gartmann, “...daß nichts an sich selbst vollendet ist”[:] *Untersuchung zum Instrumentalschaffen von Luciano Berio*, p. 25: “Er zeigt das Material vor, verwendet dabei auch Verworfenes, komponiert im Stile Schuberts, ergänzt kräftig, macht teilweise aber auch das Fragment als solches ersichtlich, gibt seinen Kommentar als Komponist der heutigen Zeit und macht so zugleich Distanz und Nähe dieser Musik erfahrbar.”

authentic document for reader and performance. In order that musicians and scholars can see precisely what it was that he himself had done, Berio has Schubert's entire sketch printed in a smaller typeface along the bottoms of the pages with, above it in ordinary type, his own suggested version for full orchestra. Essentially this serves as a reminder to us that Berio is not giving us Schubert's Tenth Symphony: only Schubert could do that and death prevented him from doing so. He left most of the work unfinished, and his Tenth Symphony is something we shall never have.

Berio's musical tapestry: threads of splendor

For the publication of the Schubert–Berio *Rendering* with Universal Edition, Berio wrote a detailed program note which outlines his artistic intentions both in his orchestration of Schubert's fragments and his general approach to Schubert's score:

During the last several years, I have been asked once again to do "something" with Schubert. I always declined this kind but cumbersome invitation until I received a copy of the sketches that the 31-year-old Franz had been accumulating during the last few weeks of his life in preparation for a Tenth Symphony, in D major (D936a). These sketches are fairly complex and of great beauty: they add a further indication of the new paths that were taking Schubert away from Beethoven's influence. Seduced by those sketches, I therefore decided to restore them: restore and not complete or reconstruct.

I have never been attracted to those operations of philological bureaucracy which sometimes lead musicologists to pretend they are Schubert (if not Beethoven) and "complete the Symphony as Schubert himself might have done." This is a curious form of mimesis that has something in common with those picture restorations sometimes responsible for irreparable damage, as in the case of the Raphael frescoes at the Farnesina in Rome. As I worked on Schubert's sketches, I set myself the target of following those modern restoration criteria that aim at reviving the old colours without, however, trying to disguise the damage that time has caused, often leaving inevitable empty patches in the composition (as in the case of Giotto in Assisi).⁴⁰

In this program note, Berio offers for his work the metaphor of a modern fresco where he freshens up the early colors without trying to hide the damage. He emphasizes that it is not a question of completion or reconstruction, so in the end no complete picture comes about.

⁴⁰ Schubert–Berio, *Rendering per orchestra* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1989), preface.



Figure 14.1 Giotto, *Isaac rejects Esau*, fresco in the Upper Basilica of St. Francis, Assisi. Used with permission of St. Francis Basilica, Assisi.

This artistic intention is aptly signaled by Berio's title, *Rendering*, which carries multiple meanings, all relevant to the artistic principles of the score: namely translating a text from a foreign [musical] language or making this piece of music available to an audience in performance. It also alludes to the cement or connective tissue applied to the surface of Schubert's score or suggests a perspective drawing outlining an architectural idea of a finished score.

In *Rendering* Berio tried in every way he could to do this in a spirit that could be considered authentic to Schubert.⁴¹ To this task he brought profound love⁴² and a profound knowledge not only of Schubert's other works but also of his working methods in the sense of compositional techniques. Like Newbould, Berio would appear to agree that if Schubert had turned the sketches into a full score himself, he

41 Schubert–Berio, *Rendering per orchestra*, preface, paragraph three: “In the first movement (Allegro) I tried to safeguard the obvious Schubert colour. But not always. There are brief episodes in the musical development which seem to lean towards Mendelssohn and the orchestration naturally follows suit. Furthermore, the expressive climate of the second movement (Andante) is stunning: it seems to be inhabited by Mahler's spirit.”

42 In his Charles Eliot Norton lecture “Translating Music,” Berio described this work as “my own act of love for Schubert and for his sketches of his unfinished symphony in D major (D.936A), which occupied him in the final weeks of his life,” *Remembering the Future* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 40.

would have done it differently, with all the unpredictability of genius and with a sense of complete freedom to change whatever he felt like changing. Unlike Newbould, Berio believed the crux of the work is missing and he announces this musically in the transition passages where (apart from the rhythmic connections) he makes no attempt to imitate Schubert's style. Much of Berio's three movements hardly sounds different from Schubert's sketches—except that with each introduction of the celesta the sound world changes to a more contemporary idiom. Schubert's historical fragment remains very unclear at the edges: it is a sound world where another sound world comes through.

The structure of Schubert's sketched opening movement is not easy to decipher. Berio's starting point sets out from the three-movement symphonic fragments D.936A of Schubert's Tenth Symphony, but he also weaves in melodic reminiscences of late Schubert works—the Piano Sonata in B flat, the Piano Trio in B flat—which are hidden in the connective passages and crossed by polyphonic textures based on fragments of the same sketches.⁴³ In the fragments he takes up from the first movement, Berio omits the opening of the Allegro maestro sketch which Schubert had crossed out and turns to the second fragment which Schubert marked "Anfang" (Beginning), at first literally orchestrating the piano score in a manner which follows the "Unfinished" Symphony⁴⁴—a decision perhaps inspired by the spirit of the second movement, reinforced by its B minor tonality and triple time. Here, in the opening movement, Berio's "freshening up" of Schubert's sketch is initially signaled in the first subject, measure 4,⁴⁵ where Berio adds the first of varying motor rhythms in the strings to maintain musical impetus. Such additional passage-work helps to weave Schubert's score into a coherent whole, and as the celeste heralds the first transition, we enter a different sound world, distant and *pianissimo* (Example 14.1). Berio's scoring for solo instruments with violins I and II, *divisi a 4*, violas, cellos and double basses *divisi a 2*, heightens this dynamic contrast. The new level of expression, *molto lontano non "cantare,"* voiced by muted strings and brass, with alternating *piano tutti* passages, is colored by wind trills, violin glissandi, single-note tremolos, and pizzicato passages. Berio's rich textural montage and imaginative scoring is underscored by a formal and harmonic vagueness, which allows us to hear these passages as interruptions wrought by time.

43 Berio's Program Note for the recording of Schubert–Berio *Rendering* on 2 and 3 October 1995 in London and conducted by Berio (London: BMG Music, 1997), p. 4.

44 Two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets in A, two bassoons, two horns in D, two trumpets in E, three trombones, timpani, and strings.

45 Berio does not, in fact, use any bar numbers in the score, a decision consistent with the fragmentary nature of Schubert's score.

Example 14.1 Schubert–Berio *Rendering*, first movement, figure 6

6 Molto lontano, non "cantare"!

1) tremolo su due posizioni diversi

Textural sparseness is an important element in Schubert's writing and the second movement embodies a wonderful musical economy, calling to mind the striking opening horn passage of Schubert's Ninth Symphony or the last song of *Winterreise*, "Der Leiermann." Schubert couples this sparseness of texture with the free contrapuntal character of the music concentrated in the second movement. In *Rendering* Berio explores and deepens investigation of these musical antinomies; he does not reconcile them but makes them more apparent by the adaptation of three contrapuntal exercises found among Schubert's sketches completed by the composer in the final weeks of his life (Example 14.2).

Example 14.2 Schubert–Berio *Rendering*, second movement, contrapuntal exercises by Franz Schubert, dated November 1828

(a)



(b)



(c)



The fragments of two-part canon in reverse are elaborated on by Berio, who makes their influence more profound and more keenly felt. He actually scores the second in diminution and makes the third rhythmically more complex. Schubert's haunting B minor melody, rhythmically reminiscent of the sarabande (Example 14.3):

Example 14.3 Schubert–Berio *Rendering*, second movement, first subject

is first signaled rhythmically by the strings and later richly orchestrated with Schubertian allusions to the tonic major (figure 3 in the score). A contrapuntal thread in Schubert's sketch, woven into the fabric of Berio's score (figure 4 in the score), provides momentary relief before the dissonance of irreconcilable antinomies reemerges at the *molto lontano* passage at figure 6 in the score. When Schubert's poignant melody returns, it is accompanied by a secondo part, which profoundly enriches the expressive character of the movement. Berio's sensitive handling of this musical material shows just how good these ideas would have been, had Schubert lived to work them out. So little is notated by Schubert, yet so much music is there. The sketches contain the musical essence of a symphony; a distillation of what the music could be. In a similar vein the emotional impact of the music is not a creation of Berio's: it is already present in the fragments of Schubert's score. Berio's decision to frame this movement with distant bridge patches is undoubtedly inspired by the cancellation of the original coda by Schubert, who did not live to weave this musical material into a revised coda.⁴⁶ For Berio, this musical material "seems to be inhabited by Mahler";⁴⁷ for me it has a character of its own. However, Berio successfully captures the anomalous character of Schubert's score.

For the third movement, originally headed "Scherzo", Schubert sketched two contrasting, contrapuntal themes, yet in his development of this material he abandoned this sketch and began a fresh draft, this time omitting the "Scherzo" title, and reworking the material as a combined scherzo and finale. There is nothing about this impressive polyphonic material that suggests art as a document: as a reflection of reality or the composer's recognition of his impending death.⁴⁸

Example 14.4 Schubert–Berio *Rendering*, finale, rondo theme

46 Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 387.

47 Berio, CD liner notes, p. 4.

48 The work, in fact, shares the lack of revolt, the lack of desperation, the sense of tranquility and peaceful acceptance of a new, other form of existence found in Gérard Grisey's threshold songs, *Quatre chants pur franchir le seuil* (*Four Songs for Crossing the Threshold*) written in the months before his death in 1998.

By introducing Schubert's material with repeated sections and reserving any formal repetition passages solely for this final movement, Berio weaves together a developed scherzo finale. The included fragmentary sketches, which alternate between the character of a scherzo and finale, show Schubert testing out different contrapuntal possibilities of the musical material. Such ambiguity of form, and the possibility that Schubert might have developed this material in some new way, was the musical magnet that drew Berio to the score. His endeavor to make this ambiguity structurally expressive contributes to two layers of meaning: a consciously unhidden confrontation of Schubert's and Berio's musical worlds.

According to Newbould, Schubert resorted to sketching symphonies in piano score "whenever he felt himself at a stylistic impasse or contemplated a work more ambitious or adventurous than its predecessor, which might therefore involve more trial and error in its composition."⁴⁹ Certainly Schubert's sketch for his final symphony marks both a beginning and an end in that it exhibits many innovations.⁵⁰ As in Berio's realization, it seems Schubert's symphony was planned as a three-movement form, with a central slow movement, the third movement combining the functions of scherzo and finale. Such structural innovations reveal an unprecedented handling of symphonic form.⁵¹ Schubert's novel use of a slow tempo at the beginning of the development section in the opening movement was also unprecedented in a symphony.⁵² Texturally, the contrapuntal character of the second movement and the double counterpoint, canon, augmentation and fugato passages of the scherzo-finale bear the imprint of Schubert's counterpoint lessons with Simon Sechter in the final weeks of Schubert's life. The scherzo-finale is the most polyphonic symphonic movement Schubert ever penned.⁵³

A world elsewhere: Schubert's Tenth Symphony

The question of what Schubert's score might have held is fascinating, like the figure from Keat's "Ode on a Grecian Urn", the "silent form" that "dost tease us out of

⁴⁹ Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 385.

⁵⁰ This counters old images of Schubert found, for example, in Arnold Whittall's "The Sonata Crisis: Schubert in 1828", *The Music Review*, 30 (1969): 124–30. For some welcome revisionist literature on Schubert's handling of large-scale forms: see, for example, David Beach, "Schubert's Experiments with Sonata Form: Formal-Tonal Design versus Underlying Structure", *Music Theory Spectrum*, 15/1 (1993): 1–18; John M. Gingerich, "Remembrance and Consciousness in Schubert's C Major String Quartet (D 956)", *The Music Quarterly*, 84/4 (2000): 619–34; Gordon Sly, "Schubert's Innovations in Sonata Form: Compositional Logic and Structural Interpretations", *The Journal of Music Theory*, 45/1 (2001): 119–50.

⁵¹ Newbould pinpoints an interesting precedent of a scherzo-finale in piano literature where the final movement of Beethoven's Sonata in G major, Op. 14, No. 2 is marked 'Scherzo' and is in rondo form. Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 388.

⁵² Ibid., p. 386. Again Newbould identifies an interesting paradigm in Spohr's *Faust Overture*.

⁵³ In other works, Brian Newbould details Schubert's "early efforts at fugal and canonic writing: his 'mirror' counterpoint in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, his palindrome in *Die Zauberharfe* [...] the Fantasy in F minor for piano duet and *Lebensstürme*," *ibid.*, p. 388.

thought.” In Berio’s *Rendering*, it is interesting to consider what has been left out. The tension between what is represented and what is not, between the articulate and the “silent” is suggested by Berio’s realization, where Schubert’s “silence” is an essential aspect of the score. The lack of reality achieved in the musical no-man’s-land of the *lontano* bridge passages guarantees that no utopian window is thrown open to what is lacking in Schubert’s incomplete score. A polystylistic distinction is evident between sections which are tied to the fragments and to Berio’s abstract yet connective bridging passages. Berio has done a superb job of piecing together the symphony without losing Schubert’s voice; at the same time his technique of alienation prevents the illusion of lost beauty in Schubert’s score.

Part of the poignancy of Berio’s completion is that it is scored by a composer in his twilight years. Berio’s recognition of a shared plight seems to unlock his love for Schubert, which delivers him to this artistic end. Thoughts of his own death undoubtedly deepened Berio’s attachment to Schubert’s fragmentary score and the resulting work is as much a comment on the position of the aging modern composer as on Schubert. With the promise of youth, as in Schubert’s score, years behind him, Berio’s reflections about music are at the center of this work—a late work that mitigates the ravages of time. Berio, like Schubert, becomes, therefore, a figure of lateness itself: a poignant commentator on both past and present. Berio keeps the irreconcilable present in his art so that his score moves from something significant (the fragments which were discovered) to something more obscure. In other completions death is kept at bay, yet by not “completing” this unfinished work, Berio brings us closer to Schubert’s solitary truth. To listen to the Schubert–Berio *Rendering* is in the end to accept the utterly honest peculiarity of Berio’s sensibility, which returns constantly to that area where love, death and regeneration are linked. *Rendering* embodies the human plight in musical terms, directing feeling into a logical circuit which allows no resolution, no escape: unsettling in effect.

Artistic exiles

Life imitates art, but art imitates life; insofar as possible, Berio’s score imitates death. Berio’s *Rendering* is lateness itself in the Adornian sense, intent on remaining untimely and contrary in the Nietzschean sense. The score itself is stylistically anachronistic, a union of contrapuntal devices woven into a fabric of Schubert’s music, within the framework of a modern score.

The Schubert–Berio *Rendering* is a montage of beginnings and endings, an unlikely bringing together of youth and age. Schubert’s inventiveness is taken up by Berio and reformulated dialectically in modern terms, so that *Rendering* becomes a performance of Schubert’s individual musical thinking, where irreconcilable opposites are deliberately collapsed into each other. Schubert’s music is episodic, fragmentary, riven with absences. Berio allows us to hear the silences, the fissures, and makes no attempt to lift the veil of death. By maintaining a fractured score Berio defies illusion or reconciliation and forges a new language of completions, not of orderly communication but of astonishing lyricism, highly wrought intensity, and startling truth. The challenge of Berio’s completion is its fierce antinomianism.

The antinomies, the fragmentation, the lostness are beautifully married to the ironic perspective of modernity. Berio is a man in love with life's paradoxes, a wanderer himself, feeling the deepest empathy for Schubert's unfinished score.

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